

Point three



April 1994

The magazine of **TOCH**

Easter – Passover – Race Issues

HIV/Aids in Zimbabwe – Branch News



Point three

The Magazine of Toc H

Toc H is a movement of people who seek to build friendships, and offer service, across the barriers that usually divide us from one another. The basic unit is a group - at best a good cross-section of the local neighbourhood - which meets together regularly, and seeks to serve the community around it. Toc H was founded in 1915 by the Revd P B 'Tubby' Clayton, and since then has been providing opportunities for people to test the Christian way by practical experiment.

All members pledge themselves to try:

1. To welcome all in friendship and lessen by habit of thought, word and deed the prejudices which separate people.
2. To give personal service.
3. To find their own convictions while listening with respect to the views of others.
4. To acknowledge the spiritual nature of man and to test the Christian way by trying it.

This magazine is a forum for ideas about Toc H and about the world, as well as a record of Toc H service. Its title derives from the third of these Four Points. Letters, articles and news items are welcomed and should be addressed to The Editor, *Point three*, at the address below.

Opinions expressed (including the editorial) are those of the individual contributors and not necessarily those of the Toc H movement.

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Cover: Photo by Timothy Nunn.
*Roselyn Toga and her daughter
Lorraine are both HIV Positive.*
- see article page 8



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Hill 60

At the top my son goes on alone.
'To walk up to the monument', he says,
'to understand!'
I, resting at the edge of the hill's green bowl
watch him as he moves away, solid flesh
dispersing into points of light
pressing against the shine of heat.

We have come companionably up the track
from the road in the insect-noisy heat of noon
across the sad dust of men and horses,
the grim rust of guns
to the rim of this green hill
where it rests against the sky.

Now he goes on alone and I remain.
Other sons are gathered hereabouts
in grey patient congregations
companioned only by each other.

These are the journeys that we make alone
to quiet places where we learn the grief.
My son to see the monument;
I to this spot where a far tree stretches
against the sky and thunder speaks
like distant guns.
Each must know for himself the moment
when the veil rends.

Later, emerging, I watch the trees
ancient and yet newborn,
rooted in this long death
shake out all their summer green
and hear in the long grass the business of insects
and think how the sound of crickets
is like the clicking fall of dice.

Jacqueline Bartlett



Easter

This is the most beautiful season of the year, especially in a European spring. But what may not be generally known is that the season actually lasts for 12 weeks. The 40 days of Lent, followed by the 40 days of Easter to Ascension. Starting after Shrove Tuesday on Ash Wednesday we recall Christ's temptation in the wilderness after His Baptism, and during Holy Week we travel with Him as He enters Jerusalem on Psalm Sunday to the acclamations of the crowds. Then come His Passion, the Trial and Crucifixion. This year Easter and the Passover of our Jewish brethren fall together as Passover starts on 27 March and

ends on Easter Day itself; thus this year it is a doubly religious feast. It is followed by the six weeks when the apostles met Our Lord a number of times after His Resurrection, until the day when He ascended into Heaven in their sight, and they were told by the angel to wait in Jerusalem for the coming of the Holy Spirit.



For so many this is a commercial feast. For those of us who love Christ it is the most important feast of the whole year, and to our Jewish brethren it recalls vividly the day of Deliverance from Egypt.

These are important dates to remember, for they draw us ever closer to Our Creator, to the love we have each for other, regardless of race or creed or nation. He - God - made this beautiful world. We have no such gifts of creation, but we can help to renew what mankind has spoiled so that our Lights may be reflected in the stars of Heaven.

Let us rejoice in the rebirth of the world in the Resurrection of Christ our Lord and Saviour.

Christ is risen - Christ reigns. May He reign in all our hearts.

Eunice Hixon

Pilot - Toc H Southern Africa

A Date I Can Never Forget

My earliest memory is of a huge black shape threatening to engulf me. I was six months old. Many years later the image was explained by my parents - I had been rushed to hospital for an x-ray to determine whether I had swallowed a sixpence. The fact that this episode was sufficiently traumatic to have etched itself on my permanent memory makes me realise how very relative is our own sense of tragedy.

On 25 January I read a report in the middle of my newspaper which shocked me so much that it has haunted me ever since. A nine-month old baby had starved to death beside the body of his mother. They had been dead for weeks when their bodies were discovered. And this wasn't in Somalia, Ethiopia, the Indian sub-continent, or in Bosnia. This was in Britain; in the heart of a thriving, well-nourished, residential area.

And I wept. I wept for the diabetic mother who had lived alone with her baby and who had lapsed into a coma; but more especially I

wept for that baby. His only experience of human life had been the trauma of days devoid of warmth and nourishment; without love and without care - his cries unheard.

The bald newspaper article made me put my own memory of once being a six-month old baby into perspective. It made me feel self-indulgent and selfish - selfish for having good things and wanting more. I also felt an uncomfortable sense of guilt; guilt that someone like Rose McCormack should die unnoticed, that no neighbour had heard a baby's cries. Perhaps I might have been as unseeing.

I say that I care - and I really believe that I do - but how well do I really know and understand my own neighbours? How sufficiently aware am I to know when things are wrong for people?

Logic tells me that I cannot take responsibility for the troubles of the world, but my conscience tells me another story. It simply isn't good enough for me to just

do as I please anymore. I need to heighten my awareness, develop my senses, in order to be more aware of what happens around me. I need to feel the pain of others in order to become more aware.

Saint John's Gospel tells us, 'Jesus wept'. Nothing could be more succinct, nor so telling - it reflects the very essence of compassion. And therein is a particular message for me about humility - I cannot afford the complacency of believing that my awareness of human suffering is sufficiently attuned, I must be more aware.

I pray to God that I may be given the humility needed in order to better sense the suffering of my fellow beings, and the compassion and courage to respond to it, even at the risk of being rejected.

Jesus went on to suffer for us all. From this example we surely have so much to learn.

Stewart Casimir

The Meaning of Passover

Sheila Shulman was born in New York in 1936, but has lived in London since 1970. She became a student at Leo Baeck College in 1984 and was ordained in 1989. She currently teaches at Leo Baeck College and is Rabbi at Beit Klal Yisrael (North Kensington Reform Synagogue). She continues to find herself surprised and diverted by the course her life has taken.

We are asked to consider the festival of *Pesach*, or rather the event which that festival celebrates, well before its actual date. This is because, while our celebration of all our festivals becomes richer and deeper the more we learn and the more we prepare ourselves inwardly, *Pesach* is the only festival in which we are explicitly asked to relive the experience in which it originated. It is also the only festival which has generated a unique text, the *Haggada*. Let me explain something about it.

B'chol dor va dor, chayav adam lirot et-atzmo k'ilu hu yatza mi mitzraim... 'In each generation, every person should perceive himself or herself as if he or she had actually come out of Egypt.' This is the core of the *Haggada*, the Telling, of *Pesach*, and the most difficult part to grasp. But unless each Jew can make that sentence real in all its many dimensions - no matter how tired we are from work or from preparing, or both, no matter how odd it all feels - if we don't try to do that, then I think we will be left with a sad flatness and a sense of loss. And that would be a great pity on this richest and most exhilarating of festivals, during which, for me anyway, everything I love about being a Jew comes together in strand upon strand, binding me closer to my tradition even as I realise how much work there is still to do.

Let me say something of how it is for me. I think the way to the core of the *Haggada* is to bring it into our own lives, our own experience, and our own understanding of the world. I think we need to place our

present lives in dialogue, or it may be in confrontation, with this ancient story of our people, and with the commentaries upon it that are included in the *Haggada*.

When I told a friend that I wanted to write about the *Haggada*, but didn't know where to start, because it shoots off so many sparks in my head every time I look at it, she said, 'Well, how does it make you feel?' 'Proud', I said, 'proud and glad'. 'Why?' she said. 'Because of the connections'. In a very different context, the novelist E M Forster said 'Only connect'. He meant, I think, that we compartmentalise our lives at our peril. Our task is to look for and make connections, to look for the wholeness in life and in ourselves. In that way we will work toward integrity, wholeness, *shalom*, and learn at last to be truly human.

So here is this pedagogical tract, this manual of liturgy and ritual, this strange, bumpy, apparently formless collection of bits and pieces of text - the *Haggada*. It's old as the hills, full of ancient ritual actions that go back to a vanished civilisation. Here is this weird text, so piercingly beautiful one moment, so angular and peculiar the next, and what does it do? Again and again, it makes connections: between the past and the present, between the individual and the community, between faith and ritual, between anger and love, between human action and God's presence.

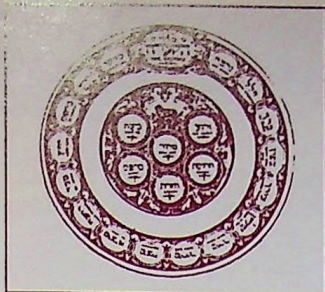
But most of all, most central of all, I think we will see, if we read the *Haggada* faithfully and carefully and lovingly, that it is about the

connections between freedom and slavery, and that those connections operate in every dimension of our lives, now as they did then, and for all the time in between. The *Haggada* is about how the political, social, individual and spiritual dimensions of freedom are inseparable and interdependent, how any one of those without the others is a mockery, and how any kind of slavery is degrading and crippling.

This is a double-edged perception. It has to do with ourselves, with others, and with the connection between us. The Jewish American writer Grace Paley said, out of her own experience with the *Haggada*, 'I began to understand in my own time and place, that we had been slaves in Egypt and brought out of bondage for some reason. One of the reasons, clearly, was to tell the story again and again - that we had been strangers and slaves in Egypt and therefore knew what we were talking about when we cried out against pain and oppression, in fact we were obligated by knowledge to do so.'

The other side of that perception is our acknowledgement that each of us, now, is not yet free. Here are two comments from the *Midrash*: 'By far the worst part of the slavery in Egypt was that the Israelites had come to accept it.' And the other: 'It was not enough to get the Jews out of Egypt; Egypt had to be gotten out of the Jews.' Both of these statements are still true. If some of us are not free, then none of us are free.

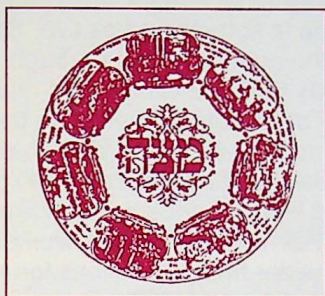
Here is a small example of how we might look more closely at the



Seder Plate



Kiddush Cup



Matzah Plate



Reproduced by kind permission of the Jewish Museum, London

text of the *Haggada*. As you all know, the story has two beginnings. The first is *Avadim hayinu l'faro b'mitzraim*, 'We were slaves to Pharaoh in Egypt'. The second is *Mi t'chila ov'dey cochavim haya avoteynu*, 'In the beginning our ancestors served idols'. These two beginnings are not a sort of hiccup in the text, or a redundancy, or a confusion. On the contrary, they are a key to the rabbinic understanding of slavery. The rabbis defined slavery both as the absence of political autonomy, and as spiritual subjection, inseparably. Both conditions are still with us today.

And here is another even smaller example. Some of the rabbis

derived the word *Mitzraim*, Egypt, from *tzar*, a word meaning a narrow, tight place, a constriction. So for them, Egypt is not only a place in the past, but a condition in the present, of which there are many versions.

That's some of what the *Haggada* is for me. It is a sort of manual for a festival which points us again and again to a fundamental reality about Judaism. As one modern commentator said: 'The story of the Exodus challenges the idea of a permanent identity, and denies that there is an inexorable fate. It is in our hands to change our lives and to change the world - God has shown that radical change is possible.'



Rabbi Sheila Shulman

Racist Statements Cameo

The editor joined Development Officers David Harrison, Simon Cottingham and CEC member Di Claxton on a weekend Cameo in Malvern at the end of January. The Cameo, *Racist Statements*, explored some of the assumptions, attitudes and history of racism in our culture. The idea behind this was the belief that casual use of language, the structure and 'rules' of organisations and the systems in which we live, disadvantages people. The weekend was intended to give a better understanding of the underlying issues and a number of strategies for dealing with them.

The 16 attenders came from widely different backgrounds and experiences. Liz is a black radical feminist who is highly articulate about women's issues and race issues; Chris manages a travel agency specialising in ski tours; Jim was the first black Lord Mayor of Bristol and combines being an inner-city publican with life as a JP; Simon is a graphic designer; Natasha is a Sikh who is tired of being asked how it feels to be discriminated against because she is black. She says, 'it's like being asked what it feels like to be raped'. No one asked this question at the weekend.

Di Claxton describes the Cameo:

'Organised by the Bristol Cameo Group and Michael Mallows, an experienced outside facilitator who had been invited to run the sessions, the intention was to explore some of the assumptions, attitudes and history of racism within our culture - including ways in which the use of language, the structure and rules of organisations and the systems in which we live may disadvantage people.

Michael Mallows led us into discussions and considerations around various issues and concerns surrounding race and racism. We were a mixed race group and all had different levels of awareness and different experiences to draw upon, resulting in thought-provoking sessions and leaving many of us quickly feeling that we had gained a great deal, to consider and assimilate.

We considered elements of prejudice in general, relevant to any minority groups of whatever type. We looked at where our feelings came from, what affected our views and ways in which we could help improve the quality of life for those different in some way from the comfortable majority.

We considered the following questions:

How does our cultural/racial background affect our attitudes?
Do we see other peoples' culture/race as a cause of problems?
Do we see race/culture as part of the solution? Can/do we accept, acknowledge and understand other cultures? Do our (unconscious) expectations about other cultures affect our relationships? Does our (unconscious) cultural bias have any impact on our relationships? Does any cultural prejudice or racism that we have expressed, experienced or witnessed, affect our relationships?

The experience of a Cameo is a very personal one, making us dig deep into our own values, views and emotions. The experience is often not an easy one, sometimes uncomfortable, sometimes rewarding and always very challenging. It affected each person differently and we all took away something different from the weekend. Michael made it quite clear that he didn't intend us to simply leave the Cameo and

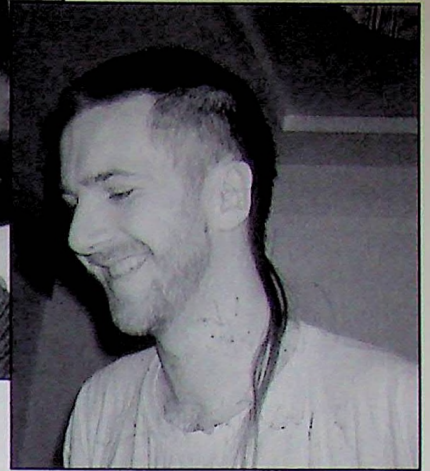
'forget' to do anything. It was put to us that all too often we form groups of people to talk or complain about things, while not being prepared to do anything about it ourselves. It is too easy to always expect others to do everything. We talk ourselves out of things by saying that our contribution would be so small that it would be worthless, so what would be the point? Others could do it so much better! I'll think about it tomorrow/next week/whenever. Sound familiar to you?

I left the Cameo feeling that, however small, I was going to do something. I was not going to let the spirit generated over the weekend diffuse into nothingness. I would hold to the fore the thought that even a small thing done is something positive. Some of the questions that I brought away from the Cameo are relevant to Toc H work as well as to the Cameo itself. This is part of what makes Cameos such a good Toc H experience. I would like to ask all Toc H members/workers to consider these questions for themselves AND produce an answer, a plan of action, as a result:

What are you willing to commit to making a difference? What would others see, hear or read that would be evidence of this? What must you do to initiate this and when will you take the step? What will it cost you not to do it? How will doing it make you more the kind of person you would like to be? If we are not prepared to do SOMETHING, however small, then what is the point of belonging to Toc H?

Remember - it might take a lot of sand on both sides to balance the scales, BUT it only takes ONE GRAIN to tip that balance.'

Yours might be that grain.





Care in the Community:



ZIMBABWE SPECIAL

The Mashambanzou centre is a symbol of hope taking place in the community and prevention programme on the days when such people are often stigmatised, like 'Aids Kills' has been the message emphasised by the community responsibility and care from Harare. Picture by [unclear]

Before you even set foot inside the Mashambanzou project a wave of laughter greets your ears. As you enter the building your senses are overwhelmed by the buzz of conversation, colour and activity.

In the light, brightly decorated room some 30 women are busy sewing, knitting and crocheting. In the corner a group of five young women - the source of the laughter - are gathered around the table exchanging jokes and stories. The punchlines send them into fits of hysterics and work is put aside for a while.

Mashambanzou is a drop-in centre situated in Waterfalls, a Harare suburb. It takes its name from the Shona words 'kushamba' (to wash) and 'nzou' (elephant) and refers to the early hours of the morning when the elephants wash and refresh themselves at the river. Its broader, symbolic meaning is 'the dawn of a new day'. The name was chosen to offer hope and inspiration to those on the threshold of a new life - people living with HIV/Aids.

Mashambanzou was set up with the aim of providing people infected with the HIV virus, or suffering from full blown Aids, with the guidance

and support needed to come to terms with their condition and to live full and normal lives.

Many of the women attending the cooperative have had first hand experience of the isolation and loneliness which an HIV diagnosis can bring. Some have been rejected by their families, others have already lost husbands or children to the virus. Almost all have experienced extreme poverty.

A New Life

For women such as Noleen Ephraim, coming to Mashambanzou was the start of a new life. When she first discovered her HIV status she thought that her life had ended. Her husband already had full blown Aids and her four-year-old son, Tinashe, showed symptoms of the virus. She was in serious debt to the n'angas (traditional healers) and was struggling to pay for a small bare room she shared with her family.

'When I first came here I was thin, tattered and torn,' remembers Noleen. *'I didn't even talk. I just looked at the women laughing and wondered, "Do they really realise that they are HIV positive and that they're going to die".'*

Over the next few months Noleen was to receive the support and help she needed to rebuild her physical and emotional strength. Alongside counselling and information about her condition, Mashambanzou provided her with a high protein diet and access to medical treatment. While Tinashe attended the playgroup, Noleen joined the project to learn new skills and earn a small income.

A year after her arrival, Noleen is not only at the centre of Mashambanzou's activities, but has become the embodiment of 'positive living':

'As time went by, I began to accept my status and to realise that I must live positively,' she says. *'Before I became positive I was always competing with other people and thinking big thoughts. Now I spend my days talking and laughing - I don't waste time thinking about rubbish. I've learnt to be thankful for what I've got, to be happy with my surroundings for today and not to worry about tomorrow or next week.'*

'Aids is there, it's a reality and I've had to accept it. Now I'm just determined to live my life to the full.'

For Noleen and the other women at Mashambanzou much of their new

A Modern-Day Love Story



**Mashambanzou drop-in
in Zimbabwe
polishes the revolution
the country's Aids care
programmes. Gone are
sufferers were shunned
and, while bald slogans
have been replaced by
stigmatising community
love. Sarah Lee reports
features by Timothy Nunn.**



found strength and determination comes from the support which they give each other. A weekly 'Body Positive' support group enables them to share their experiences and discuss common concerns. The importance of this support network is clear:

'Sharing my problems has taught me how to cope with my situation,' says Tendai, who joined Mashambanzou earlier this year. 'I've now taken being positive as the start of a new life and a time to change my lifestyle. It makes me happy to be here with the other women and I don't feel lonely or isolated anymore. Through living positively I've learnt to accept the virus and have hope for the future.'

A quiet but vital revolution is taking place in Zimbabwe. Attitudes toward HIV/Aids are changing and changing for the better.

Ever since the first cases of Aids were officially reported in the mid-80s, both the government and public of Zimbabwe have run the full range of responses to the growing crisis. From an initial

stage of denial, to nationwide scare tactics, the responses have reflected the fear and ignorance of institutions and individuals alike. For years the nation was gripped by panic, and stigmatising Aids sufferers became the order of the day.

As the epidemic approaches its peak, however, there is increasing evidence of a turnaround. From the pain, despair and confusion which previously characterised attitudes towards HIV/Aids, a new era of hope is beginning to emerge. In many ways the positive approach exemplified by the women at Mashambanzou is becoming a national policy.

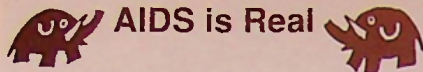
'At first no-one knew better about anti-Aids messages and we adopted the slogans used in the West,' explains Dr Evaristo Marowa, Programme Director of the Government's national Aids Coordination Programme (NACP). 'We thought we could prevent the epidemic from arriving by using slogans like, "Aids kills". However, we soon learnt that you can't utilise a message like that.

It doesn't work and has no practical significance. It simply blocked people's minds and responses. We're now encouraging more supportive messages which people can reflect on and utilise. We need to base our work on positive aspects to strengthen prevention and to initiate care and support.'

Nowadays, the terror tactics are being replaced by slogans based on understanding, empathy and responsibility. The new posters on the surgery and classroom walls read 'Care enough to love safely' or 'Community commitment in the fight against Aids'.

As the epidemic continues through the 90s, generalisations and superstitions about HIV/Aids are being replaced with hard facts and practical advice. Politicians and health care professionals have accepted the challenge of addressing the crisis in a positive and responsible way.

Most importantly of all, the new wave of awareness and support is filtering down to the grassroots level and changing the attitudes of people within their own homes and communities.



AIDS is Real

'At first the community in our area didn't know anything about HIV/Aids and people suffering from it were stigmatised,' says Gift Moya, a community counsellor at Tshelanyemba Mission Hospital in rural Matabeleland South. 'But gradually, through extensive education, they began to realise that Aids is real and is a community crisis. Now people understand and accept those with HIV into their homes, to nurse and care for them within the community.'

There are increasing signs that the days of stigmatisation, ignorance and fear are nearing their end. *'When Zimbabwe started its awareness campaign in 1987 people didn't want to hear about Aids,' says Helen Ndimanda of the Aids Counselling Trust (ACT). 'If you mentioned the word, you were asking to be thrown out of a discussion. However, as the epidemic progresses people are realising that it's not only "them" that are affected - everyone is part of the problem. Now there's a feeling of empathy towards each other as individuals, as families, as communities.'*

'Three years ago people would say, "What are you going to do about it?" Now they're beginning to come to us and say, "How can we help?" They're beginning to realise that they have a role to play in the fight against Aids.'

'In the long run I don't think it can go any other way than bringing us together as a force united by the problem.'

When Roselyn Toga stands up in front of a classroom of school children she has more reason than most to want to put across a clear message on HIV/Aids prevention.

Two years ago Roselyn's young daughter Lorraine was admitted to hospital suffering from measles. After she failed to recover in the standard two to three days, the doctors advised that she be given a blood test. The results showed that Lorraine was HIV positive. Roselyn realised that she too must be positive. *'I was so shocked to realise that I was positive,' she recalls. 'At that time I didn't have enough information and didn't really understand what it all meant. I just thought it was the end of my life.'*

Over the following months Roselyn tried to learn as much as she could about the disease. As time went by she began to see a new mission in life - using her own experiences to prevent other people, especially the young, from becoming infected with the virus. Last year she started doing Aids awareness work as *'a way of advising others that Aids is really there'.*

'It's said that the Aids virus doesn't choose between the young and the old. I advise young people to be careful with their lives and to make the right choices. Some understand what I'm saying and accept it. They say that they've learnt from my experience and that they're going to change.'

Roselyn's work is part of a vast education programme taking place throughout the whole of Zimbabwe. From beer halls to churches, work places to sports clubs, the message has reached nearly every sector of society. And the greatest emphasis has been placed on the young generation. The reason is only too clear.

'Statistics show that ages five-19 are relatively free of HIV, but there's a massive jump after 20,' says Cliff Wang, director of the Aids Programme from the United Nations Children's Fund (Unicef) in Zimbabwe. 'Quite simply, no other generation has had to cope with a problem like this. Aids is out there, it's real and there's no cure.'

'If it's to be stopped, young people are going to have to change their attitudes and the way they act. They must realise that they're at risk and that the consequences are permanent. We're asking this generation to act totally differently from their parents because with Aids nobody's immune or safe.'

Unicef, working with the Ministry of Education, has recently introduced a course called Lifeskills and Aids into the national curriculum. The programme is unprecedented in its scale and is seen as a pilot project for the whole of Africa. Alongside the distribution of hundreds of thousands of books, its success is seen to depend upon the involvement and commitment

of the 55,000 teachers receiving training for it.

'We are placed in a situation where we must play a vital role in stopping this epidemic,' said the deputy regional director for education for Harare at a recent workshop for teachers. 'We are responsible for school children - people who are still pliable and who could still change their behaviour. We are in charge of an age group which still has a chance to survive.'



Safe Haven: Nurses and patients have a quiet moment together.

However, even more important than the role of educators, there is growing evidence that young people themselves are willing to become increasingly active in the fight against the disease. Anti-Aids clubs and drama groups have sprung up all over Zimbabwe. There is also an increasing number of peer education projects in which young people educate each other about the relevance and dangers of HIV/Aids to their lives. As a result, cautious optimism is beginning to mount that at least one generation can be saved from the epidemic.

'If we concentrate our efforts on youth then we stand a chance,' says Helen Ndimande of ACT. 'If they grow up responsible then they will become responsible adults and they'll teach their children to be responsible. At the end of the day we can hope to have a responsible nation.'

For Roselyn Toga, the motivation behind educating Zimbabwe's youth is clear: *'It enlightens my heart to talk to them and to hope that at least some of them will learn about the virus and be free of it. If they get the information they need, accept it and change their lifestyles, the world will be a much better place.'*

Your Letters



The Heart of the Story

It was difficult to follow the Revd Alan Johnson's editorial about the Bishop of Durham in the February issue of *Point three*. This should not occasion any great surprise I suppose since, for my part, it is never easy to be in any kind of harmony with Bishop David Jenkins.

The National Chaplain clearly concludes to the contrary, and he is of course entitled to express his own opinion. He should not, however, sweepingly decide that the Bishop 'has done us all a great service by his hesitant and humble pronouncements'. How pray, and in what way? His constant probing of the very tenets of the Christian faith is at best divisive, at worst deeply offensive.

It is regrettable, too, that our Chaplain appears to give succour to this latter-day doubting Thomas whose pronouncements 'have been distorted in order to sell newspapers and sensationalise'. Now I hold no particular brief for the media, but it really is naive to imagine that the newshounds will scorn the chance to make hay when Bishop-inspired 'copy' is handed to them on a plate. It is noteworthy that so-called distortions have come from the same source with fair frequency; nothing like keeping the pot on the boil!!

To finally have the National Chaplain actually thanking the Bishop for underlining a message for Toc H is the last straw. Not all members, please. As the inimitable Samuel Goldwyn would have said, 'Include me out'.

Ernest Carter *Welshpool*

The Heart of the Story

Just to say thank you for February's editorial. It is heartening that someone has at last spoken up, as resoundingly as the media and some churchmen have spoken 'down', about Bishop David.

Until the Bishop arrived on the scene and made his remarks, my churches (three parishes) had never asked me so much about the Resurrection - nor had the villagers! He makes many observations which people in the pew are reluctant to voice.

Later I used the Bishop's Lent Course, 'Into God's Future', which was one of the best Lent Courses I have experienced. It stirred the participants into discussion and action!

Amen to your 'Thank you, Bishop David'. And thank you Alan.

Revd Brian Blade
Faversham

A Window to the World

I am privileged to be Chairman of our local Talking Newspaper Association, which has one of the largest circulation lists in the country. We are very fortunate to have the ongoing support of several colleagues from the Clacton Branches of Toc H.

There are many ways in which members could offer their services to such a splendid service. Producers, editors and readers are always needed on the night that the tape is recorded, and we need help with unpacking returned tapes and packing and mailing them off again. There is a lot to do! Why not help this marvellous service and do a kind deed for the blind and partially sighted - after all it is 'their window to the world'.

Gordon Minshull
1A Coronation Road
Clacton on Sea
Essex CO15 3HG

Faces to Names

Particular thanks for the March edition of *Point three*. Over the years I've tried disparately to keep up-to-date with changes at HQ but recently realised that there were currently only three 'faces' that I had met and knew personally.

I was delighted therefore to open my March copy and at last be able to fit faces to names. Though my reasons for visiting Wendover become rarer and rarer as the days pass by, it's nice to have the visual impression of people whom one has previously known only by name.

George Lee Solihull

Editor's note: George's daughter Sarah has written the article on page 8, about the work of the Mashambanzou drop-in centre for people living with HIV/Aids.

Annual Branch Accounts

The new forms and procedure recently sent out are to help Toc H comply with the forthcoming requirements of the Charities Act. It is important that we all work to the closing date of 6 May, because we have to add the total of all your accounts to the main national ones. This will then enhance Toc H's standing in the essential major fundraising effort we are planning. Your help towards this will be invaluable.

We are aware that some branches have a more detailed and extensive way of reporting to their members than the form sets out; the new form need not interfere with that, but if you require your previous method to continue, it will necessitate completing the proper form in a consolidated manner, both for the Auditor and the members' approval.

Headquarters will support you by sending their part of the information needed as early in April as possible. If John Matthews at HQ, or I can help you with any difficulties, please ask.

Gerry Conibeer
Honorary Treasurer

BRANCH NEWS

New Members

Welcome to 16 new members

George Ridgway (Ashby-de-la-Zouch M)
Marion Thompson (Bargoed W)
Brenda Francis (Barrow on Humber J)
Susan Dougherty (Berlin J)
Leslie Gamble (Broadway M)
Robert Owen (Central)
Margaret and Paul Cleminson (Chiltern Hills J)
Angela Fulcher, Winnifred Partridge,
Mary Smith, (Higham Ferrers W)
Sylvia Austin, Iris Johnson (Nailsea W)
Doris Gowland (Station J)
John Cathcart (Skelmorlie & Wemyss Bay J)
James Cameron (Solihull M)

Congratulations to Toc H member
Rev'd Ron Cottingham on his appointment as
Archdeacon of St Helena.

Congratulations to Audrey Smith, a much loved
member of **Cleveland District** who celebrates 50
years with Toc H on 6 April. The District are holding
a party for Audrey on 9 April.



Congratulations to Ann Crouch, National
Development Officer for Friendship Circles and
member of **Oatlands Branch**, on the birth of her
great grandson Joshua on 10 January. Joshua has
two great great grandmothers still living. Ann's
mother, Florence Cox aged 87 holds Joshua.
Proudly looking on is Ann's son David, David's
daughter Amanda, and Ann.



*Back Row: Betty Simmonds, Frances Toop.
Front Row: Olive Jones, Rose Groom, Jean Thomas.*

The Rotary Club award an annual trophy to the club
which enrolls the most new members during the year!
If Toc H did the same, would we, the **Rushden
Afternoon Branch**, be the winners this year? Our
branch is new - we have only been meeting since
October 1992, and on 25 January we had the
pleasure of initiating no less than five new members.

The village of Broadway conjures in the mind an
idyllic picture postcard image, with the sun glistening
on the local golden stone. The buildings, which are
up to 600 years old, lend themselves to the romantic
and artist alike. This image is of course pre-motor
car days and nowadays is somewhat obscured by
four wheeled vehicles and often up to 20-wheeled
juggernauts. All is not lost however, because the
village harbours a group of men dedicated to offering
help, fellowship and friendship to anyone who
needs it. We are of course members of the local
Broadway Branch of Toc H!

We keep busy throughout the year and enjoy our
fellowship. A high-spot recently was our celebration
of 'Tommy' Trinder's 80th birthday. Tommy was
warden of Dor Knap and readers will be pleased to
know that he is well, retains his usual effervescent
personality and sends his greetings to you all.

Elmstead Joint Branch held their fortieth AGM on
9 March. They continue to meet regularly on the
second Wednesday of each month, with an average
of 10 people attending: 'During the last year we have
enjoyed talks from guest speakers, had a quiet
afternoon with readings and prayers and an inspiring
talk from our Padre. We have continued our work of
remembering and visiting the sick and housebound
and providing knitted blankets and baby clothes for
those in need. We held raffles among members and
sent a donation to the Haywain Playgroup Project at
Jaywich. We also had a coffee evening as our
special effort for Headquarters.

We all do what we can to work in the Spirit of Toc H
despite old age and infirmity. We carry on
undeterred' says Myrtle Betts.

UK Volunteer Week 94

Branches will have received Director Mike Lyddiard's letter on UK Volunteer Week in June. A reminder to all Branches in Division One that the Divisional PR and Appeals Officer Stuart Wroe is available and would be delighted to provide publicity advice, support and assistance for their efforts during this week. Contact Stuart on Skipton 0756 795086.

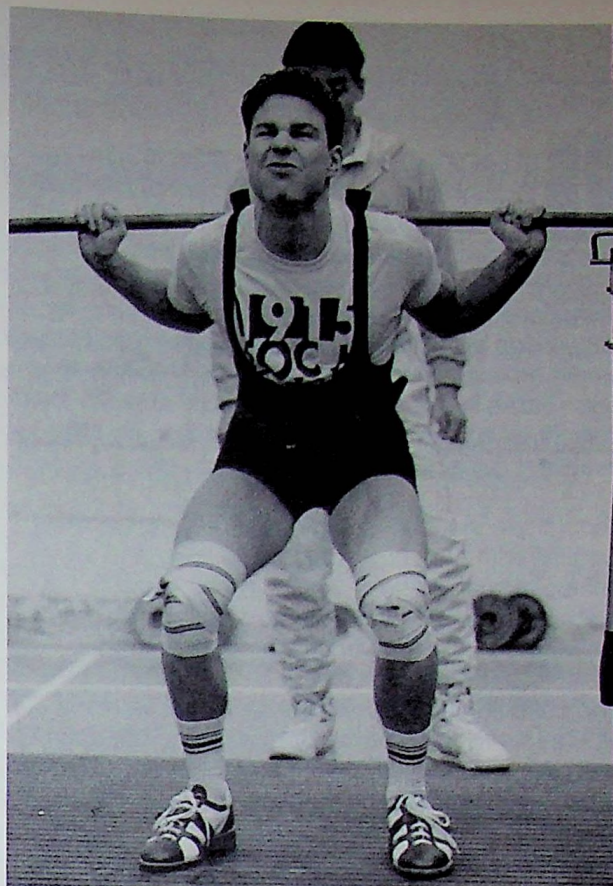
The Trinity Centre

Mike Lyddiard was guest speaker at the recent Annual General Meeting of the Trinity Centre in Birmingham:

'I was completely overwhelmed by the warmth of welcome that I received and the high regard in which the Trinity Centre, its staff and volunteers, hold Toc H', says Mike.

His presentation, bearing in mind Toc H's long-standing connections with the Trinity Centre, focused on recent developments in the voluntary sector which, he felt, posed threats to the sector's independence and freedom to act. Mike saw his visit as a welcome opportunity to get a taste of the extent of work that is being done through the Centre with homeless men, and the steady expansion of the Centre's work in this field since its foundation in the 80s.

Through its various outlets, the Trinity Centre is able to offer accommodation for homeless men in excess of 120 beds, and for a great deal of the time the occupancy rate exceeds 80%. An increasing number of homeless men are coming to the Centre for help with mental health problems. The care and love the Centre offers is often, the only point of refuge. Mike feels that this emphasises the crucial role that our Friendship Circles can play in helping people along the road of recovery, and empowering them to take the last step towards recovery: 'I find myself more and more excited by the potential of our own Friendship Circles in playing a real and crucial role in this type of work.'



Gareth Williams - 'Strengthening the good thing thus begun'



Reunion of Residents of Tubby Clayton's former Vicarage, at 42 Trinity Square (1946 - 56 vintage)

Hugh Tunbridge writes: 'Our Ladies came to Bath last November to join the annual party at a hotel just outside the City. Present were :- John and Paddy Hobbs, Ray and Irene Daniels, Don and Pamela Fraser, Ron and Jean Hooper, Don and Grace McGlashon, John and Susan Woods, Roy and Fay Salisbury and Hugh Tunbridge.

'With more time than usual we were able to spread our photographs of combats with other London Marks (athletics and swimming etc.) off-duty pastimes (dances, table tennis, snooker and cricket), and many other holidays and worthwhile occasions. We return to London for 1994 (November) and hope to venture to Hereford in 1995.'

Our Day of Days

I sat in the dining room day dreaming my way through breakfast; a warm glow of anticipation and even excitement growing within me as I contemplated the Consultation Day ahead.

Invitations had been sent, and people thirsting for knowledge and struggling to contain their excitement would be flocking to learn about Toc H. It had all been carefully planned. Guests would arrive in three distinct waves; in the morning for coffee, for an excellent buffet lunch or for afternoon tea.

I could see them all, standing shoulder-to-shoulder juggling with their cup, saucer and plate and talking enthusiastically. Those who came early would have grabbed a table on which the crockery would be moved as if in some frenetic game of draughts.

The consultation team would have their work cut out as they answered searching questions. The team had been carefully chosen for their commitment, knowledge and expertise. Along one wall of the room would be the exhibition in picture and prose, lovingly designed to support the team's effort to communicate. Leaflets and booklets would be liberally spread about on tables for the guests to take when, reluctantly, they had to take their leave.

The day was to be one of sharing. Our guests would learn of our dynamic Movement. Surprise would be expressed at the diversity and quality of our work. They would marvel at how we managed to keep it all so secret. The team would have no difficulty in allaying any suspicion of our lamp being dim. True stories would be told of our many achievements, some bringing a catch to the throat; whilst ladies would reach for a tissue, the men would turn their heads in a vain attempt to hide their emotion.

The role of the team was to discover all they could about the guests, all of whom were representatives of various statutory and voluntary organisations serving the local community. Our team would display sensitivity towards the guests, whilst looking for a gap in the provision of service that might provide the opportunity for Toc H.

There might be a chance to cooperate on some venture. Something that their organisation would like to develop if the resources could be combined. On a personal level, the team would present themselves with instinctive understanding, fully aware of the problems and stress experienced by fellow workers in the field. It would be the caring face of Toc H.

The prospect of taking part in that scenario was heady and exciting. I left the table and hurried to dress, wondering about what was appropriate for

such an occasion. Toc H sweatshirt with symbol? Tee shirt with slogan across the chest? Pin striped suit seemed at the opposite swing of the pendulum. I settled for sports coat and flannels.

The sun was warm and pleasant as I reversed the car out of the drive. To match the spirit of the day and my own mood I thought a tape of Mozart would be about right. Driving along the busy roads, I felt a sense of well-being and benevolence towards other road users. I wished them all well and a safe journey. I took the scenic route with fine views of the countryside, which all added to my feeling that this was our day of days.

Entering the building I encountered the team standing in a group, each nursing a cup. I thought how splendid they looked, each one the epitome of all that is good about Toc H. They greeted me warmly and someone dashed to the kitchen to get me my tea. It was 10.30 and the first wave would hit us at 11.00. Soon we would find ourselves without a moment to spare. At 4.00 that afternoon, completely exhausted, we would collapse in happy fulfilment.

Now, if my memory serves, only four people came all day. We were shocked and stunned. We were at a loss to understand how they could miss such an opportunity. The invitation, carefully worded, had given an outline of the day and a little of what our Movement had to offer. It was an appetizer that they had declined to accept, not to mention the refreshments. All I could think was that there must be a different breed of social and community worker nowadays, that would not take advantage of a free lunch.

The day quickly lost all sparkle and charm. The sunshine that I had welcomed that morning now hurt my eyes. The sounds of the day became muted and the heady wine of expected success turned sour. We feted those dear souls who did come; we had to: there was so much to eat. They showed great interest in all we had to say, even though we lost all sense of coordination and were falling over one another to serve.

We offered each other consolation and support in our great disappointment. It was too early to hold a post-mortem. Our combined mood was that we did not much care. Sufficient unto the day....

The drive home was terrible. Evening traffic through town and city was not a happy prospect and turned out to be an even worse experience. I was simply eager to be home, and for that day to end. It was not 'our day of days' - it was just one of 'those days'.

Bill Bains ■

Book Review - Opting out of the Mainstream

New Testaments - *People who found purpose talk about their lives* Judith Rice

Fount Paperback. £6.99

Here is an extraordinarily rich mixture of people. All of them, in their search for integrity and a sense of purpose, have opted out of ordinary suburban living and the salaried security of the nine-to-five commuter. Some of them have entered the monastic life - Christian, Buddhist or Hindu. Some are committed at a very practical level, like the man trying to build understanding across the Peace Line on the Shankill Road, or those demonstrating against Trident missiles on the Clyde. Some, like the Pagan shaman, whose spiritual familiar is a toad, or the founder of the Fellowship of Isis, seem somewhat freakish.

The book is beautifully written, bringing all these disparate individuals to vivid life. You see the circumstances in which they live and hear, largely in

their own words, the journey which has taken them to this point and the convictions which motivate them. You begin to understand the themes which link them, outwardly different as they are.

Yet it's much more than a good read, though it is undoubtedly that. These stories pose questions about our own life journeys. All these people have, to some degree, opted out of the mainstream of life. How do we who are unable to opt out recognise the crucial importance of many of their concerns? How do we, in our ordinary, mundane lives, combat the dangers threatening our planet and recognise and affirm the rich variety of human beings? Because there's another way of opting out and that's pretending the challenges don't exist.

Ken Prideaux-Brune

Deaths

We regret to announce the death of the following members

Thomas J Bond (Griffithstown)
Margaret M Osborne (Nailsea)

December

Jean Barr (Skelmorlie & Wemyss Bay)
Maurice Laybourne (Ouse & Hull District)
Margaret Taylor (Brandon)
Margaret White (Wolds District)

January

Helena Atkin (Lymington)
Robert A Bowles (Wyre Forest)
Norman F Chidley
(Broadstairs & St. Peter's)
Martha N Field (Salcombe)
Henry B Smith (West Somerset District)
Edward Wynne (Great Harwood)

February

Emily V Cruickshank (Watford)

March

Special Tributes

It is with deep regret that Great Harwood Men's Branch report the death of **Canon Edward Wynne** on the 10 February aged 78 years. He was a member and Padre of the Blackburn Branch for many years, while serving as Vicar to St Gabriel's Church. In 1990 Accrington and Great Harwood Branches erected a memorial to the 'Accrington Pals' at Serre, on the Somme. Canon Wynne led the dedication service which was televised by the BBC and incorporated into Songs of Praise from Accrington on Remembrance Sunday in 1991. Edward then joined Great Harwood Men's Branch and was their Padre for three years. He was an extremely popular member, always kind, thoughtful and cheerful, with a terrific sense of humour. He was liked by everyone and will be missed by so many people, particularly his friends in Toc H. DE

Wyre Forest Branch regret to announce the death of **Bob Bowles** on 10 February, after a long illness to which he never gave way. He was at the Branch meeting three days before his death, even though he was desperately ill. For many years he was both Secretary and Programme Secretary. He set up the local voluntary car service, Toc H Thumb-A-Lift, for people who needed transport to get to hospitals, doctors, etc. He was a pillar of his local chapel, active in the Meals-on-Wheels service, a founder of the Junior Section of the Wyre Forest Conservation Society and enjoyed many other activities. He was one of those unsung heroes, due to his unassuming manner. We shall miss him very much. BE

On 1 March, Watford Branch lost one of their long-standing members, **Emily Cruickshank** (known to everyone as Vera). She held various branch offices and was always a very loyal and supportive member. Vera maintained an interest in Toc H during her long period of illness. She will be sadly missed. NW

Major Henry Bowen Smith, a member of the District Branch in Somerset, died recently at the age of 94. He was a personal friend of Tubby Clayton and had been a member of Toc H since its earliest days. WO

80th Birthday Celebrations

As part of its 80th Birthday Celebrations Toc H is hoping to hold an Open Poetry Competition which will attract entries from membership and further afield.

A small steering group, Jackie Bartlett, Ken Prideaux-Brune and Ruth Boyd, are looking for one other person from the membership of Toc H to join them in planning this event and forming part of an adjudication panel. In due course we will be inviting an established poet to work with us.

If you are interested in poetry, are able to criticise its literary value and would like to be involved, then please contact Jackie Bartlett at Headquarters, as soon as possible.

Coach Trip to Poperinge

Travelling overnight 22 June and returning 29 June 1994.

Cost will be approximately £200.

For further details please contact:

Sylvia Pratt,
41 Torksey Road,
Sheffield S5 6LB.
Tel: 0742 467143

Cuddesdon House

Friends' Working Party, 2-5 June 1994

The Friends' of Cuddesdon House are arranging to spend time doing jobs around the house and garden and to enjoy friendship and fellowship. There will also be time to appreciate the countryside and relax in the evenings.

If you would like to attend, whether or not you are already a Friend, please contact: Megan and Harry Graham,
7 Upper Park Avenue,
Rushden,
Northants NN10 9NY.
Tel/Fax: 0933 56671

Family Holidays 1994

ALISON HOUSE - 15 to 20 May.

A chance to do some walking and, for the less energetic, sightseeing by minibus!

Cost: £128

TALBOT HOUSE, POPERINGE - 14 to 20 September.

To include a visit to the Somme and to Antwerp.

Cost: £186 plus £12.40 insurance.

For more details on either or both of these holidays, please contact:

Jack and Pat Turner, 60 Hall End Road,
Wootton, Beds MK43 9HP. Tel: 0234 768410

Alison House Spring & Summer Programme

Spring Painting Week: 23 - 29 April

Tutor: Harry Muscott ATD NDD FRSA

Price £150 per person, inclusive of VAT

Pastels & Oils: 8 - 13 May Tutor: David Newbould

Price £160 per person, inclusive of VAT

Alison House Spring Garden Project: 23 - 27 May

With John Biggerstaff

Price £35 per person, inclusive of VAT

The Brew Holiday Week: 2 - 9 July

With Vera Brew as your Hostess

Price £175 per person, inclusive of VAT

Summer Painting Week: 23 - 30 July

Tutor: Harry Muscott ATD NDD FRSA

Price £175 per person, inclusive of VAT

Friends of Alison House Week: 6 - 13 August

Join the Friends of Alison House and enjoy a truly traditional week including walks, competitions and an opportunity to visit local events.

Price £175 per person, inclusive of VAT (excluding outings)

Alison House Autumn Gardening: 3 - 7 October

Price £35 per person, incl. of VAT

Further details of these and other events at Alison House may be obtained by sending an SAE to: Bill and Dorothy Pepper, Alison House Training and Conference Centre, Intake Lane, Cromford, Derbyshire DE4 3RH

South East Kent District Kent Day

Saturday June 11

- Ashford Baptist Church Hall, Station Road

Coffee from 10.30 am

Speakers

11 am Mike Lyddiard - Toc H Director

2.15 pm The Revd R.G. Blount - Industrial

Chaplain to Dover, Folkstone & the Channel Tunnel Development

For further information, please apply to:

Mrs Florrie Marshall, Gaagrec, London Road, Sholden, Deal, Kent CT14 0AD

Facing and Working with Failure Cameo

Wortley Hall, Wortley, Sheffield

22 - 24 April Cost £20

There are still places available on this Cameo weekend, run by staff members, Bill Bains and Ann Crouch. The intention is to explore failure. How does it feel to you when things go wrong? What can/should you do about it? Where do the responsibilities lie? This is an event for anyone involved in Projects, Circles, Branch Life or indeed any activity which has the possibility of failure. It promises to be a very lively and interesting weekend in the beautiful Yorkshire countryside.

For more details please contact:

Bill Bains, 25 Whinmoor Gardens, Leeds LS14 1AF

Small Ads

Small advertisements must be received (with remittance) five weeks before publication day, which is the 23rd of the preceding month. The charge is 10p a word (minimum £1) plus VAT, to *Point three* Magazine. Rates of display advertisements can be obtained from the Editorial Office, Toc H Headquarters, 1 Forest Close, Wendover, Aylesbury, Bucks HP22 6BT.

Falmouth Toc H Holiday House

Accommodation for 5 plus col.

Open all year.

Enquiries Ron Gatiss - Tel: 0326 312689